



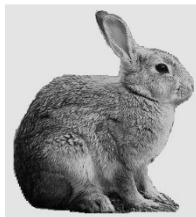
Kodalith

David Lloyd

Smithereens Press

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CONTENTS

Fields	5
Drywash	6
Petroglyph	7
Face	8
Mantle	9
Spine	10
Casket	11
Salt	12
Vitruvian	13
Prism	14
Copestone	15
Chamber	16

Kodalith

where to? said a voice then
the voice went away, by which (as if)
time, in a sea a dark mood,
over the rocks, where there are
no rocks finishes you.

Maurice Scully, *Livelihood*

Fields

So livid a gleam along the rim.
White winds descended from the
Shattering fields, runnels groove
The mantle, the folded slab breaks
Down the gradient. Numbed
In the song they sing, lay down
The possibilities: flesh knits its
Meshes into the grain of the stone.

Drywash

Dead wind off the fang-range.
Strange weather, strange witness
In the teeth of it, bit and
Grit in the fantail. Did you
Think we would leave and not leave
Bone in the downdrift?
Degrading, silting, grit angel
Sweeping the wash with your wing

Petroglyph

Skin burrs. The thumbs impress
The fibres finding the grain
Of the stone. Such transfer,
The light writing turned ghost-
Flesh mapped in stone: did we
Remember the gifted one, the four
Staves of its opening? Nothing
Is given. It gives and is gone.

Face

What the rockface encloses:
My skin imprinted with
Its warm relief, sugar-
Lift pockmarks. Open
The stone book: light etches
Its ridges, the furrow archive
Sanded away. Scar tissue stares
Into the tender slate.

Mantle

Rock breaks the living. The living
Wrap stone with all their new
Brutalities: root, blast, frack.
In the breaker's yard, bodies
Bend in the wind. We rattle
Their bones in the crown of
A hat. We rattle. We raffle
The mantle. It shears like
A sea on the shore of the living.

Spine

Januarized runnels bear down,
Open back into this thing they
Carry forward: acrid taste of
Burnt treacle or some other
Unworldly afterglow. Failed
Wings at the shoulder shrug
Pain to the floor, it slips down
From the spine. Easy. Easy on.

Casket

Hurt bleeds into another's rib,
Another beat, a casket
Sealed into the cleft for
Future incubation. Lidless
Eye turned in to the handprint
Fixed in sand: night compact
Pressed into the socket. Think it
A fold, a wrinkle, graved in the skin.

Salt

Salt ventures underfoot: a thread
Trodden back into the slab, dulled
Savour to the tongue, reminding.
A plain wind dresses the stone,
Histories scored into its face
It stands out from the dark room,
White remnant of the promised
Flight: what you do give to be of

Vitruvian

Vitruvian, ridiculous, braced
In the crevice, the aperture
Shrinks your horizon: black
Marble curtains for you, for you.
Quartered in stone, water-drawn,
Hacked into with light piers,
The white bits ciphered across
The slab. Percussed. Sprung.

Prism

A thing breaks beyond naming.
In the grit depot, in the shingle
Archive, blood meets with its
Congealing. Your debrided palm
Greet the horizon: sky-prism
Shredding the lightface late
Into the farness, into the violet
Wash over fracture and fold.

Copestone

The coping weighs on his shoulder:
Turn at a stroke, to the eyeball
Welled up with minding. What if
The thing should sing then, sing
Out from the nought rim, spelling
With numbers, a jabber flush to
The finish. You're history. Drapes
Sweep the place of its leavings.

Chamber

Some pause and then resume. Erratic
Rock adrift on the mantle: what
Are you doing here, stone chamber
Voided with stone? The burden
Bears down on the bone, shin
Ache, joint skew: come dance
With me into the black site, come
Sing with me into the dry dark, into
The wind's teeth, ad lib, ad lib, ad lib

Note: Some poems from *Kodalith* were initially published in *Hambone* 20, Fall 2012, with thanks to Nate Mackey.



David Lloyd is a writer and critic, born in Ireland and currently living in Los Angeles and teaching at the University of California, Riverside. *Arc & Sill: Poems 1979-2009*, (Shearsman Books and New Writers Press, 2012) collects his five previous books of poetry: *Taropatch* (Oakland: Jimmy's House of Knowledge, 1985), *Coupures* (Dublin: hardPressed Poetry, 1987), *Change of State* (Berkeley: Cusp Books, 1993), *Sill*, (Los Angeles: Cusp Books,

2006), and *Vega* (Los Angeles: Mind Made Books, 2009). His play, *The Press*, has had staged readings in Dublin, Los Angeles, Liverpool, and Manila, and premiered at Liverpool Hope University in 2010. As a critic, he works on Irish literature and culture and on poetry and aesthetics. His most recent critical book is *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity, 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (Cambridge, 2011). He is the editor of Cusp Books, a chapbook press based in Los Angeles.



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